

LIAISON REPORT

AGENCY: MICA **LIAISONS:** Lisa McCoy, Ashley Thompson, Austin Graber **11-06-18**

Need for Program

Mission:

MICA provides opportunities to people in vulnerable situations. They equip them to achieve stability, security and success. They collaborate with families and partners to create communities where fewer people find themselves in poverty, and those who do have a path out.

MICA's programs are Story County Dental Clinic, Child Dental, Story County Emergency Food Pantry, Steps to Success and Fluoride Varnish and a new request for Nevada Full-Day Preschool Program. The target population are low-income, uninsured patients as well as insured by Medicaid and other income based insurances from their mid-year report. These services are connected closely to Human Services.

During ASSET FY 17-18 the dental clinic served 1,013 unduplicated patients in 2,296 appointments. The clinic did not have a full-time dentist January-June 2018. Of the 1,013 patients served 75% were Story County residents. The top priority for funding is to raise more dollars for the Dental Clinic due to Medicaid pre-authorizations denied and even more reductions in retroactive payments.

The Food Pantry volume of more families coming in is increasing: Approximately 323 families were served each month for a total of 3,878 family visits. Families can come once a calendar month to pick up food or additional boxes in emergency situations.

The Steps to Success program is important because it connects families with other services through the family development plan. MICA served 27 individuals from 13 households in the program during FY 17-18. They maintained a waiting list. Specialists and families address barriers to the families success.

Nevada Full Day Preschool Program (Headstart) is a new service that MICA is seeking funding for from ASSET. The classroom capacity is 16 children. Children are selected to be in the program based off certain family factors and risk factors, ensuring children and families most in need of services are selected first.

Program Strengths

A major strength that contributes most importantly to the program/service outcomes at MICA is Gloria. She has been advocating for over 5 years on how better to serve our local families.

After 6 months with no fulltime dentist in July a dentist was hired. Positive benefits are seen with a full-time dentist.

Josie shared that the Food Pantry is grateful for their longstanding volunteer base and the Food Bank of Iowa is now delivering to Ames so no need for paid staff and volunteers to drive to Des Moines to load and then return and unload purchased items. Food can be purchased so much cheaper from the Iowa Food Bank.

Program Weaknesses

Managing and searching for grant dollars takes a lot of time. Gloria would like to hire a part-time person to assist with this function which will free her up for other important functions in her leadership role.

MICA is also working on strategies to consistently engage this community to support them with food donations throughout the year. Food Pantry team are working towards creating a process

to have pre-made food bags ready for family pick up which could increase their efficiency. Could the ISU engineering students assist in developing this new process and advising what will need to be in place to sustain it?

Financial Outlook

As stated above, the top priority for MICA is funding for the Dental Clinic to sustain operations due to reduced Medicaid reimbursements. Gloria was meeting soon with United Way and also direct with a Medicare contact to discuss options and concerns. While the fee structure ensures that their patients can afford the care they need, it creates a gap in funding. The Dental Clinic only accepts one Dental Wellness Plan – Delta Dental and the reimbursement rates are very low.

Current funding for Preschool from the BooSt Together for Children Early Childhood Iowa Area is not certain as notice that funding will likely decrease by approx.. \$17,400. If funding is not received they will need to seek other funding opportunities or decrease the amount of service provided such as fewer days per year or half day rather than full day services.

Internal Management Practices

Gloria is a strong manager with several years of experience as well as very active in attending ASSET meetings.

Josie, the Family Development Director, has been with MICA for almost two years and has good ideas to improve services like pre-made food bags and how they can buy their food from Des Moines Food Pantry cheaper.

Agency Suggestions/Comments

Find ways to have meaningful dialog with Medicaid decision makers on how the recent no retroactive payment changes may bankrupt many families.

GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Any funding that ASSET can provide will be very timely and much needed for MICA and our low-income families impacted by recent Medicaid reductions in payment.

Dental work should be in reach for all who need it and this one of a kind operation allows that to happen.

The necessary and quality services that the MICA team provides every day has a real impact on the lives of many people in assisting them to be self-sufficient.